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CHASTITY SAFEGUARDS

A STUDY OF THE MECHANICAL MEANS OF PREVENTING SEXUAL INDULGENCE, IN BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, EMPLOYED IN DIFFERENT TIMES AND COUNTRIES

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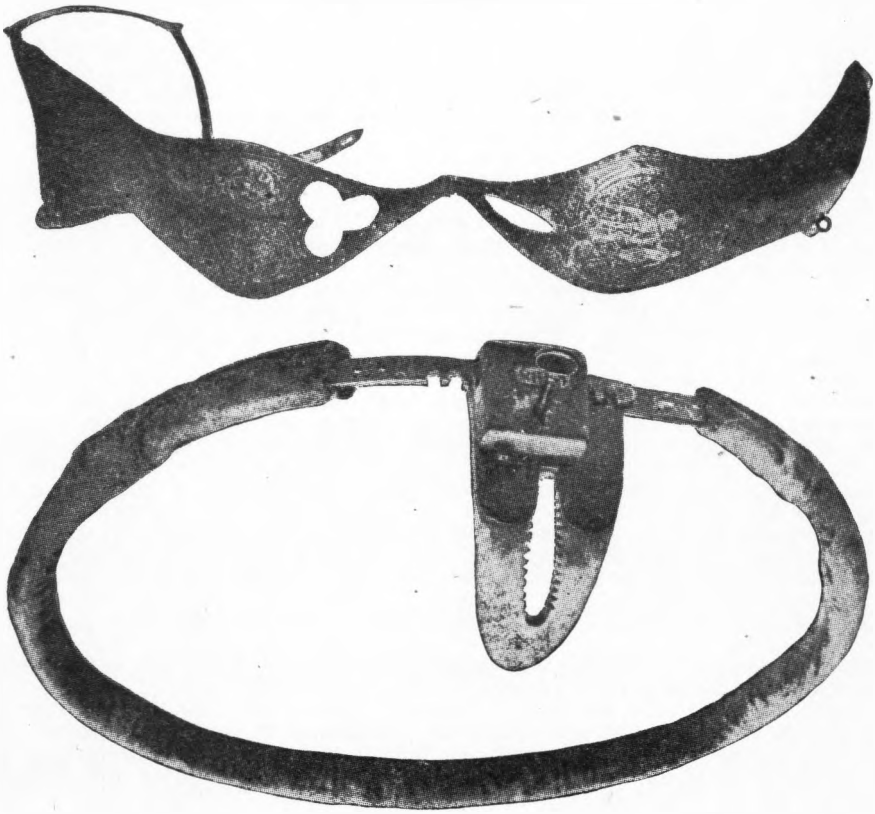

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THE MOST PECULIAR SEXUAL ABERRATION

Chastity is probably one of the oddest of the various qualities attaching to sex. It is purely a negative virtue, subsisting largely in the failure or refusal to act rather than in any correct mode of action, and how such a quality has come to be so highly worshiped by such a distinctly sexual creature as man, will forever remain a mystery to the logical mind. It is as if eating and drinking animals (among which man finds his place) were to extol the beauties of starvation and thirst. Of course, there have been religious fanatics who have attempted just that and a goodly portion of our general population, the Catholic Church members, make periodic feeble symbolic gestures at it (as on Fridays, during Lent, etc.), but the former are patently unbalanced and therefore unaccountable and the latter do it under a sort of spiritual duress from the bondage of which they joyously break free at one second past the stroke of midnight of the fast day and then frequently glut themselves out of all proportion in recompense for the unnatural abstinence they have been induced to endure; whereas with chastity it is the generality of so-called "normal" humankind that freely accords it its widespread maudlin adulation. Remy de Gourmont has said, "Of all sexual aberrations, perhaps the most peculiar is chastity," and it is likely that in this we have the seed of the answer as close to the truth as we shall readily get. Most people have little trouble in explaining the religious hermits' and anchorites' persistent addiction to self-denial in food: they simply pass it off as fanatical, "screwy," or otherwise mentally deranged. So a probable answer stands out almost of itself: when it is a matter of sex almost the whole of mankind, particularly of our Western civilization, is as whacky and unbalanced as is the fanatic about food and other little creature comforts.

There is, however, something of a difference between the two forms of unnatural self-denial. Whereas in fasting the abstinence is practiced primarily upon the enthusiast himself and only secondarily upon others (excepting, of course that large group of opportunistic professional priesthood), in sex the abstinence is by and large enforced primarily upon others and secondarily, or perhaps tertiarily or even more remotely, upon oneself. Saloons abound in vocal men who in the same breath boast of the strict fidelity they get from their wives and of the number of "lays" they have garnered from the local bowling-alley during the past month. At least part of the root of this is, naturally, the age-old regarding of women and all that pertains to their person as the inviolable property of some men—farther, husband, lover, or in slavery, master. Thus can man, the most vociferous advocate for and poorest practitioner of chastity, readily rationalize his irrational behavior—he can "do what he wants with what belongs to him, see!"

But there is a yet more subtle and vital difference between the abstinence of chastity and that of fasting. In the case of the former, in order to be the genuine article it must be total (at least total during the period it is imposed, as in the chastity of a wife during a prolonged absence of her husband), whereas with the latter such a thing is not even thinkable. Even the most rigorous and fanatic anchorite eats some food, however little and poor it may be—did he not do so he might be a holy anchorite, but he would also soon be a dead anchorite. Now with sex, total abstention is not necessary followed by death, though it might be preferable, but the appetite for it can be and often is every bit as imperious as that for food. Even when the sexual

denial is self-imposed it can carry in its train horrific torments, as may be testified to by the accounts left by some of our best saints and holy men of their terrific struggles with the flesh. Nevertheless, however trying it might have been, these persons were doing what they did by thir choice and that helped no little to sustain them in their trials. But how different it is when the abstinence is imposed by the will of another; how difficult to smother one's deepest impulse simply to satisfy the standards or whims of another, particularly when those same standards may not at all be one's own. Not only is this externally imposed chastity difficult, but with the great majority of normal, healthy persons it is totally impossible, so this leads quite naturally to the rather delicate problem of how to enforce such sexual asceticism upon another.

METHODS OF INSURING CHASTITY

The methods of insuring the chastity of another fall into four main groups: spiritual, magical, medical, and physical. The first may be considered roughly to include the whole matter of vows, oaths, resolutions, etc., to remain chaste, such as those taken by nuns and monks, those parroted by marrying couples, those extracted from wayward adolescents by indignant parents, and the like. None of these have been especially remarkable in general for their efficacy in achieving their purpose. On the spiritual side we may also include the various invocations and prayers addressed to God and the saints for aid in maintaining continence, but Heaven must be a busy place for apparently these divine mentors have been too occupied otherwise successfull to watch over their clients' interests.

The magical means differ from the latter aspect of the spiritual chiefly in that the supernatural aid is sought from agencies other than the orthodox divine beings or scientifically recognized medicines. Amulets or magic girdles may be worn, anti-philtres taken, magic ointments rubbed on where it counts. or the regions near the genitals mutilated or inscribed with incantations in such a manner as to ward off the demons of inchastity—in short, the physical counterparts of the much-used magical device known as prayer with an effectiveness about equal to it.

In the medical category we have the whole business of anaphrodisiacs, refrigerants, sedatives, certain physio-therapeutic agents, and such means of working a diminution of sexual desire or capability as to make unchasteness irrelevant. Certain of these agents have a discernible effect in the desired direction, but none to the extent that might be hoped for and all for only a relatively limited time. We do not consider here the drastic measure of castration for insuring male chastity as we are studying only the means of controlling sexually potent persons, and as a castrated man has ceased to be a sexual creature his chastity is beside the point.

The physical methods all boil down to some manner of physical restraint that makes it impossible for the person to be unchaste. The most obvious of these is incarceration, simply locking the person in a prison so that he or she has no opportunity to be anything but chaste. But this has certain practical disadvantages, chief of which is the fact that it also removes the person from the rest of living and prevents his being of any use in the world. But why imprison the whole person? Why not imprison only the person's genitalia so that his chastity will be enforced, leaving him otherwise free to move about? And it is just this that has frequently been done, and it is the purpose of the present study to examine a bit into the methods and various aspects of how it has been done.

THE GIRDLE OF CHASTITY

In the great majority of instances of confining the virtue of another, it has been female virtue that has been in point. There are several methods of accomplishing this, or of trying to accomplish it, but by far the commonest and historically best known is by the use of a girdle of chastity, known also as a *chastity* belt or at times by the French designation *ceinture de chastete*. This, in a word, is simply a contraption of one of a number of possible designs made to fit about a woman's middle in such a manner as to prevent all possibility of sexual intercourse and so locked in place as to prevent its removal by the woman or anyone not possessing the key.

Just when and where the chastity girdle had its origin and at whose invention is a matter of considerable dispute and little conclusion. Some pretend to see its origin in the ancient virgin's zone or girdle (the *zona virginalis* or *cingulum pudicitiae*) worn by maidens before marriage, but these were merely a cloth belt or sash, usually of wool, indicating, some say, the extent to which a virgin's belly might expand and proclaiming the fact of her virginity, but their relation to an actual girdle of chastity is purely symbolic as they provided no real physical safeguard since they might readily have been removed by anyone with the courage to fly into the face of custom. It is possible that anxious mothers may have knotted this girdle especially tightly and complexly upon their young daughters so that it could offer at least a partial or temporary protection against a surprise assault, and there are references in olden literature to girdle tied up with magic knots that only those in the know could undo. That Bonneau subscribes to this theory may be seen from the opening passage of his charming little work on the subject: "You may see, if you will, the origin of padlocks of chastity in that peculiar knot, called the Herculean knot, which used to fasten the woolen sash of the Grecian maiden, and which the husband alone was to untie on his wedding night. Solidify this knot, apply it to iron bars, and you have almost the padlock."

As to just when an effective chastity belt was first conceived, there is some variation in opinion, ranging with different authorities all the way from some time in the 13th century to the Renaissance. Indeed, Voltaire fancifully pushes it much farther back than that and in one of his famous verses ("Le Cadenas") attributes its invention to the ancient gods for Pluto to use on his wife Prosperpine (from Smollett's not too literal translation):

> This sage advice, a loud applause
> From all the damned assembly draws;
> And straight, by order of the State,
> Was registered on brass by fate;
> That moment, in the shades below,
> They anvils beat and bellows blow.
> Tisiphoned, the blacksmith's trade
> Well understood; the locks she made:
> Proserpina, from Pluto's hand
> Receiving, wore it by command.
> This lock, which hell could frame alone,
> Soon to the human race was known;
> In Venice, Rome, and all about it,
> No gentleman or cit's without it.

The majority of the older historians simply took it for granted

that the girdles originated in Italy during the 14th century, and this theory has a certain following even today. This was especially true of the French historians, but then for centuries the French and Italians have traditionally blamed each other for the invention of all shameful things to be found in either country. Dulaure, ordinarily a shrewd scholar, accepts this viewpoint unquestioningly. Paul La Croix, in his celebrated "History of Prostitution," pushes its origination back to the Orient, but gives Italy chief credit for its introduction into Europe. He asserts that the custom dates back to the "highest antiquity," but gives no evidence to sustain his contention. The rough concurrence of the beginning of the employment of chastity belts in Europe with the time of the Crusades may have done much to give rise to the belief in their importation from the Orient by returning Crusaders, but many scholars dissent on the Oriental origin and point out that none of the many sexologic treatises and erotic literary works of the East contains the slightest reference to the practice. Of course, it might be pointed out that these works contain little or no reference to sodomy, yet Orientals are the world's leading pederasts—that is to say, sexual hypocrisy knows no special race or nationality. The first literary reference to the girdle in Europe is in the 14th century by the Abbe Mission, and after that they gradually become increasingly frequent and find their way into ribald folk tales, then into more formal fiction, and are not infrequently an item of interest in pictures. A most curious item in a bookplate of one Melchior Schedel of 1560 which shows among other things a nude woman wearing a chastity girdle. That the chastity belt was early known in Europe there is little doubt. but that it originated in that place there is little valid proof. Indeed, examples of the device in some form, however primitive, have been found at scattered places over the globe, and it is no more likely that these all stemmed from some common source than did the idea of a house or some form of shelter. The problem of preserving one's women for oneself must have been fairly universal, and the idea of so harnessing the genitalia as to achieve this must have been a solution arrived at independently in many places whenever the resources permitted the fashioning of such a contraption.

As has been mentioned. the credit for the girdle's invention, or at least for its introduction into Europe, has by a large margin been most commonly accredited to the Italians, often more particularly to the Venetians or the Paduans. One of the best-known references to this is in Dulaure ("Des Divinites Generatrices," chap. 15): "The invention of the *girdles of chastity* is attributed to Francesco da Carrara, Imperial Provost of Padua, who lived toward the end of the 14th century. He had thus padlocked all the women comprising his seraglio. His acts of cruelty brought him to the scaffold, and he was strangled in the year 1405 by decree of the Senate of Venice. One of the chief accusations against him was the use of *girdles of chastity* for his mistresses; and, according to Mission, there was long preserved in Venice, in the palace of St. Mark, a chest filled with these girdles and padlocks, as bits of convincing proof in the trial of this monster. But I believe this custom to be much older."

Though this "Carrara legend" is extremely widespread, there is not a shred of reliable evidence to prove that he invented the chastity girdle, introduced it into Italy, or even that he had ever seen or owned one. That Italy may have been the European port of entry for the idea of mechanical chastity safeguards from the East is not at all too unlikely, but that Carrara was responsible for or even concerned in its importation or adaptation there is no indication. Indeed, such evidence as we do have points in the opposite direction. Bonneau investigated the matter rather fully and found that instead of being a vicious, cruel monster who lived only to torture people, he was described by contemporaries as a kind, gentle, and industrious man; that he was strangled for political reasons and not for evil practices;

that the records of his trial contain not a single reference to his alleged use of chastity belts or other instruments of torture; and that examination of the famous chest at St. Mark's supposed to contain such evidence against him, revealed not a thing that remotely resembled a chastity girdle.

Now, while this contrivance may well have worked its way into Europe through Italy, it did not long remain confined there but migrated onward to other countries, and first and most importantly into France. Paul La Croix, in accordance with a number of other historians, unhesitatingly asserts the girdle was introduced into France publicly during the reign of Henri III (1574-1589) and lays it to the advice of "certain Italians" of the court who were familiar with the means employed in their own land for preserving female virtue. La Croix declares quite dogmatically, if without too much validity; "Nothing is better established than the fact that this Italian mode, which had existed especially at Venice for a number of centuries, and which had come from the Orient, was actually introduced at this time. It is probabl that the Crusades had also brought to France an odious custom which could not be reconciled with the respect which our ancestors bore to ladies. This custom dated back, nevertheless, to the highest antiquity, and was perpetuated among those peoples whose religion supported the slavery of women." It is more than likely that in this connection La Croix has followed the common practice of the older historians and simply unquestioningly taken at face value the data in Brantome's "Vie des Dames Galantes." As this is in many respects one of the most famous and fairly detailed early accounts of the chastity belt, it may not be amiss to quote the passage here at length:

> "In the time of King Henry there was a certain peddler that brought to the fair of Saint-Germain a dozen of certain tools for bridling women's affairs. They were made of iron and went around the waist like a girdle and branched down to be caught at the bottom and locked. They were framed with so much art that it was not possible for the woman, once she was bridled with one, ever to be able to avail herself of it for sweet pleasure, having but a few small holes to serve for making her water.
>
> "They say there were some five or six peevish jealous husbands who bought some of them and bridled their wives with them in so safe a way that they might well say: Farewell merry times! And so there was one of these women who took it into her head to keep company with a locksmith, who was subtle in his art, and to whom she showed the said apparatus and her own and every thing. The husband being gone out to the fields, the locksmith bent his mind so closely on the affair that he forged a false key for it; the lady had the pleasure of fastening and opening it at all hours, and when she wished. The husband never found anything amiss with it; so she took her fill of this fine pleasure, in spite of the jealous foppish cuckold husband, who fancied he would always live secure from cuckoldom. But the rougish locksmith, who made the false key, spoiled all on him and, according to what they say, did still better; he was the first to enjoy her and thus made a cuckold of him. They say, moreover, that there were at Court many honest gallant gentlemen who gave the peddler to understand in severe terms, that if ever he attempted to carry like trumperies they would kill him; that he should not go there again; that he should throw all the others that still remained into the privy, which he did."

Davenport ("Aphrodisiacs and Anti-aphrodisiacs," Essay 3), after having cited the above passage from Brantome, pushes the occurrence in France back a bit farther by stating that there had been an attempt to introduce the "Bernasco padlocks" there during the reign of Henry II when an Italian opened a shop at the Saint-Germain fair where he sold the devices in such numbers that the gay blades of the time became alarmed at the implications of such a device becoming wide-

spread and descended upon the hawker to threaten to toss him into the Seine if he did not desist and depart, which he hurriedly did. However, Davenport gives no authority for this statement, and it may well be nothing more than a garbled version from the same source that Brantome drew his data.

There is no lack of evidence to indicate that some form of the chastity girdle must have been known in France before the reign of Henry III. One of the most famous of these is the reference to be found in the works of Rabelais, who died in 1553 before ever Henry III came into power, where Panurge is describing to dubious Trouillogan the basis for his certainty that he will not be cuckolded: "Nay, nay, that Nick in the dark cellar, who hath no white in his eye, carry me quite away with him if, in that case, whenever I leave my domestic residence I do not clap a Bergamasco lock upon my wife as cautiously as they used to ring mares in our country to keep them from being sallied by stoned horses." From this it may be seen that in Rabelais' time common rumor must have attributed the origin of the chastity belt to the Italian town of Bergamo. Here, also, is an early reference to the infibulation of animals, of which more later.

And we may find evidence, though it is disputed by some, that the girdle of chastity was known in France as early as the first part of the 14th century, depending upon how we interpret the symbolism of a little song left by a troubadour of the time, Guillaume de Machault, one of the most prolific and effusive of the poets of that day, who lived roughly (and "roughly" is the word intended, for the troubadours were never happier than when they were pushing other men's wives around) from 1290 to 1377. In this song he is describing a little incident with one of his mistresses:

> And then my fair one gave to me,
> A strange and brightly golden key,
> Made by a master of the art;
> And said: "With this thou must not part,
> For it is the key to my rare treasure
> And thou art the lord of my gilded pleasure.
> Yes, indeed, thou art lord and master
> Of my sweet body in joy and disaster;
> So in this key lies all my wealth.
> I give it freely in glad, good health."

The lady in the case seems to have been Agnes of Navarre whose husband spent much time away from home and may have taken the precaution of locking up Agnes' "rare treasure" during his absence. But obviously Agnes had obtained a duplicate key in some manner. Shakespeare declared succinctly that, "Love laughs at locksmiths," but he might well have added that love can also employ the skill of a second locksmith to circumvent that of a first, as Brantome's little story points out. There is preserved some correspondence between Agnes and Guillaume on this "key" theme, she urging him not to lose the key and insisting that she stands ever ready to have him use it to open her "box," and he in response declaring devoutly that he will ever cherish it and rush over with it at the first opportunity so as to have a look at the "loving treasure." Some scholars insist that the *key, box,* and *treasure* are purely poetic symbolisms of the time; others, that they are employed simply as phallic symbols; and still others that it is an actual chastity belt and key that are referred to—so, one may take his pick.

But though the precise date of their introduction into France is a bit vague, there is no doubt as to the utilization of the girdles there in the later centuries. In the 17th century, according to Jean Buvat's "Journal de la Regence," Charlotte Aglae d'Orleans was forced to wear one by her husband, the Prince of Modena. From Buvat's description

this seems to have been a sort of tight-fitting velvet panties with a steel plate sewed in to fit over the vulvar region, the plate being provided with a small hole for urination. And they appear to have been fairly current in the 18th century. It was then (1716) that young 22-year-old Voltaire was aghast one day to discover one of these contrivances upon the body of his mistress, a Madame de B. So amazed was he by this that he wrote a verse about it, "Le Cadenas," a translation of which has been quoted earlier. It was also this century (around 1750) that gave birth to the most famous legal document concerned with chastity belts, the lawyer Freydier's renowned plea for his client, Mdlle. Lajon, against the cruelty of her lover who forced her to wear one of these devices. This interesting document is too long to be reproduced here, but it may be found, among other places, reprinted in its entirety in Bonneau's little book, Englished anonymously as "Padlocks and Girdles o fChastity," and in Esar Levine's detailed book on the subject, "Chastity Belts."

On the whole, it seems that Levine's conclusion in this connection is sound: that knowledge and employment of the chastity belt in France gradually increased from about 1500 to 1700, that it reached its peak sometime during the first half of the 18th century, and that after this it rapidly fell off.

Though subject to a number of variations in details of design, fundamentally all chastity belts tend toward certain basic features of construction in order to achieve their purpose; an effective blocking of the genital organs. An early (1775) definition in this vein is to be found in Grose's "Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue": "A kind of girdle contrived by jealous husbands . . . to secure the chastity of their wives." But as this leaves too many points about the device unanswered, it may be well to give E. J. Dingwall's good general description of the apparatus: "The Girdle of Chastity is a mechanical device for insuring female chastity and continence in cases where, from jealousy or from other reasons, this is desired. In its simplest form it consists of a jointed and padded hip band to part of which is attached another portion, also provided with joints, and which is composed of one or two plates of metal. This second part passes between the legs of the wearer and is secured to the band passing around the hips by some device which locks it in position. The plates are furnished with openings, often with serrated edges, which, although permitting the natural functions, are not large enough to allow the ingress of a finger. In some of the models one plate only is provided which effectually prevents normal coitus, but in certain other types there is also a posterior plate intended to preclude intercourse *in ano*."

THE PROTECTION OF SEXUAL PROPERTY

As to the purposes for which these girdles were employed, the most obvious of them is implicit in its common name, "girdle of chastity;" that is to say, they were used by men to preserve the chastity or fidelity of a wife or sweetheart, by making it mechanically impossible for them to be anything else. This, of course, served a double purpose in that not only would it protect the woman from any frailties that might crop up in her own virtue, but also would it safeguard her against any sudden sallies that some impetuous fellow might attempt with her against her will. In this same connection, they might have been locked on a woman by herself when going out to preserve herself against possible male assault, though there is little indication that they were often used thus. They could be put on women or girls to prevent their masturbating or indulging in various Lesbian tricks with other women. It could even have a therapeutic employment in controlling over-indulgence in cases of nymphomania, or to prevent injury in a woman

with some female disability. It has been suggested that they might even have been made use of as instruments of torture, punishment, or revenge, and this is not too unlikely as there are not a few women to whom could befall no more dire fate than to be taken out of carnal circulation. It has even been suggested by La Croix that the girdles at times represented one of the refinements of the Age of Chivalry and the high amatory devotion and esteem supposedly current at the time, but which however contemporary records bear out none too well. That is, a woman might voluntarily lock a girdle upon herself and present her beloved with the key to it as an indication that she was his alone, now and forever. Of course, there was no guarantee as to how many keys to the girdle she might have or how many different men might be carrying them on their keyrings, like latch-keys to a chorus-girl's apartment. The affair between the troubadour Machaut and Agnes of Navarre, referred to previously, might well have been an instance of this nature. But it seems evident that in the great majority of cases it was male jealousy or precaution in protecting his sexual property that was the dominating motive in the utilization of chastity belts. In passing, it is amusing to speculate upon how many times these girdles might have helped to defeat their own purpose by implanting in a jealous husband a false sense of security which prompted him to grant his wife a good deal of freedom and lack of surveillance that, aided by a locksmith's skill, greatly facilitated her putting horns upon the good man.

As has been said, while all serving one fundamental purpose, chastity belts are nevertheless susceptible of a good deal of variation in type and elaborateness of design and construction. Indeed, anything worn by a woman that in any manner blocks effective ingress to the female genitalia may roughly be considered as belonging to this category of devices, even if only a pair of super-tight panties like those that drove to distraction the man in Pierre Louys' "Woman and the Puppet." This idea seems also not to have been unknown to our own American Indians, and a little trick, reported by Col. R. I. Dodge in his book "Our Wild Indians," that was used by the Cheyenne women to safeguard themselves against any bumptious bucks they might run into could well be regarded as a primitive form of chastity belt: "No unmarried [Cheyenne] woman considers herself dressed to meet her beau at night, to go to a dance, or other gathering, unless she has tied her lower limbs with a rope, in such a way, however, as not to interfere with her powers of locomotion; and every married woman does the same before going to bed when her husband is absent. Custom has made this an almost perfect protection against the brutality of the men." All of which suggests the hindrance that could be offered to criminal assault simply by clasping a pair of handcuffs upon a woman's ankles, or still better a similar contrivance in the region of the knees, but this would be no more practical than locking her in a room as it would seriously impede her ability to move about. Which brings us back to the chief virtue of the orthodox chastity girdle: locking up the genitalia while leaving the woman as a whole free to go about her daily affairs.

THE INTRA-VAGINAL TYPE

It is fairly well agreed that the chastity belt may have originated in the Orient, and a favorite early design of it there is one that we may term the *intra-vaginal type.* A. O. Wall ("Sex and Sex Worship") says that they were employed in Oriental harems when a man would permit a wife or odalisque to go out to visit a friend and had no eunuch slave to send along to watch over her. He describes these girdles as an arrangement composed of a belt going around the waist, to the back of which was attached a narrow iron or leather band that passed through

a hole about four or five inches from the end of a round wooden stick something over an inch in diameter. In use, one end of this stick was inserted in the vagina as far as the hole with the band, and the band brought tightly up in front where it was securly locked to the front part of the waist band. The lower end of the stick was left fairly long, often extending as far as the knees, so that the woman, according to Wall's interpretation, "is necessarily and uncomfortably reminded that she belongs to her husband or master." Bisson, in his "Women, Enunchus, and Warriors of the Soudan," gives an example of a similar protective device that was put on harem women when permitted out alone. This consisted of a bamboo stick about eight inches in length, three inches or more of which was inserted into the vagina and the balance allowed to project between the thighs. This stick was held in place by a strap with a shield that covered the vulva, the whole contrivance being strapped about the hips and waist and held there by a padlock, they key to which was held by the eunuch who locked it in place on the woman whenever she was permitted outside the harem grounds. This type was undoubtedly the most uncomfortable of all for the woman and must have caused any amount of ills through vaginal irritation.

But the genuine chastity girdle is in some manner fashioned along the lines of drawers or panties, however briefly outlined, which effectively block access to the genitalia but do not penetrate them. A crude device of this sort may be seen in the leathern girdle or corslet which the Circassians formerly sewed tightly about their virgin daughters, right next to the skin, at the time of puberty and which remained always in place until the girl's wedding night when it was the privilege of the new husband alone to break this "seal."

But another mark of the authentic chastity belt is its ability to be removed and replaced at will; that is, at the will of the person possessing the key. These two distinguishing features apply to the great majority of Western chastity belts, and they fall into three main types which we shall now consider in order.

THE ANTERIOR TYPE

This is a peculiarly French model, a fine example of which may be seen to this day in the Musee de Cluny of Paris, unless some of the Nazis carted it off during the occupation. It is infinitely simple in design, consisting only of a thin, flexible band of fine steel to go about the waist to one end of which band is permanently fastened a lock arrangement into which the other end of the band slips, this second end being supplied with a series of notches so that it may be locked in any of a variety of positions depending upon the girth of the female whose chasttiy is being preserved. Firmly fastened beneath this lock is a sort of elongated U-shaped ivory "beak" which is smoothly finished and curved to fit the contour of the female pubis, and of a length sufficient so that its tip will extend past the vulva to the perineum. The central opening of this beak, which permits the passage of urine, is long but not wide, scarcely sufficient to admit the tip of a finger, and it furnished with a serrated edge to discourage any small man who might be tempted to try shi luck. In use, the steel hoop would be covered with cloth to prevent chafing of the waist, and the exhibit at the Cluny still retains a sheathing of faded red velvet. Indeed, legend has it that this is the very girdle that Henry II locked upon Catherine de Medici, but the scholars have ruined this fine bit of erotic folklore by pointing out that the notoriously ample dimensions of Catherine could never have accommodated themselves to the limited confines of this girdle.

THE ANTERIOR-POSTERIOR TYPE

This model has frequently been termed the "Italian type" and stands as a monument to the innate caution, or suspicion (which amount to the same thing), of a portion of that nation in matters sexual. The anterior type of girdle described above may have satisfied the easy-going Frenchman, but it could never set the Italian's mind at ease. Every man knows that a proper house has two doors, and what safety is there in locking the front door securely while leaving the rear door wide open to all prowlers? Exactly none, the Italian would stoutly aver, and the design of his chastity belt testifies to his attitude. The Musee de Cluny also has a fine example of this model, which incidentally was presented to the institution by Prosper Merimee, the author of "Carmen," who obtained it in Italy. This is made up of a jointed steel waist-band, depending upon several hinges at various spots about it rather than upon pliancy (as in the first) to conform to the shape of the wearer's waist. Fastened to the rear portion of this waist-band is a sort of hour-glass-shaped plate of thin forged steel about six inches or so wide at its ends and narrowing down to a width of about one inch at the central constricted portion, at which place there is a hinge. The rear half of this plate is forged to conform to the contours of the buttocks, and the front half to that of the pubis and lower abdomen, the thin-hinged central portion passing over the perineum in the crotch of the legs. The upper end of the front plat is supplied with an eyelet at either of its sides over which fit slots in the ends of the waist-band. To be put into position, the narrow hinged portion is put between the legs, the rear plate is put up against the buttocks, the front plate brought up against the belly, the two ends of the waist-band are brought around from the rear, the slots in them slipped over the eyelets in the front plate, padlocks fastened in the eyelets. and the lady is bound to be a lady in spite of herself. At the proper places, the front plate is supplied with a narrow, slit-like opening with serrated edges and the rear plate with a trefoil aperture with three vicious points guarding the orifice, to permit passage of the bodily excretions while the girdle is in place. All edges of this contraption are pierced with a series of tiny holes to permit the sewing on of cloth linings to ease chafing. The girdle at the Cluny is a real work of art, being ornately damaskeened and inlaid with gold and engraved with fine figures of Adam and Eve along with such other decorative matter. But despite the elaborate finishing of this device, one cannot but wonder what must have been the hygienic problems connected with these girdles, particularly if they were kept locked in place for any great length of time, as for instance while hubby traipsed off to the Crusades, or even for shorter periods as when the good man might take off for Paris for the open season on Huguenots. The apertures left in these girdles could hardly have done better than take care of the majority of the body's by-products, but we know from recent European experience that the minority can often develop considerable strength. Besides, the customary post-excretory cleansing must have been utterly impossible with such a machine in place. And how they must have come to itch after a time! The lord and master on returning from a lengthy journey and taking his dame out of storage could hardly have found her a tempting morsel. We hear many warnings today against offending with "denture breath," but what must have been the offensive emanations from those old chastity belts! Indeed, it is conceivable that in certain instances this may have done more to protect the lady's virtue than did the contrivance itself. Had the times been

dubiously blessed with our modern patent medicine industry and garish advertising there would in all likelihood have been available a special deodorant powder (large economy size recommended) to be shaken inside the girdles, "heartily endorsed by all leading alchemists," and there would have been impressive ads with a picture of a lovely lady sitting in the chimney-corner all alone at the king's ball and a caption reading: "Ye countesse would not be so forlorne did some gude fryend but telle her of G.O. (Girdle Odor)."

There have been found other examples of the anterior-posterior girdle of which the basic design was the same, but instead of these broad front and rear plates there was simply a narrow steel band running between the legs from the rear to the front of the waist-band and on which were in front a widened out elliptical portion with slit aperture to cover the vulva, and in the rear a widened out circular portion with a round aperture to cover the anus.

THE CHAIN GRATE TYPE

This was possibly the most comfortable of all types and lent itself most readily to cleanliness. It was simply a more or less triangular piece of flexible metallic grating or meshwork, with the meshes probably being in the neighborhood of a half-inch across, more or less, which was stretched across the pubic region and held in place by four fine chains, two toward the front and two toward the rear, which ran divergently upward to be fastened to a snugly-fitting waistband which was locked in place. The affair much resembled our present-day "jockey straps" that are worn by athletes, save that it was definitely not elastic and the cloth pouch was replaced by the metallic grating. What is probably the most famous description of such a chastity girdle is to be found in that most curious of the renowned pornographic, Nicolas Chorier's "Dialogues of Luisa Sigea," where the broadly-experienced Tullia is enlightening young Ottavia as to the nature of this gadget:

> "The gold portcullis [grating] was suspended by four little iron chains overlaid with velvetings and riveted with similar art into a belt of metal to match. Two of the chains on one side and two on the other held up the girdle by being passed through it behind and before. The girdle was fastened behind above the hips by means of a lock adapted to a small key. The portcullis, being about six inches high by three in width, thus ran from the perineum to the edge of the outer lips; it covers the whole space which extends between the two thighs and the bottom of the uterus. As it is formed of three open bars, the urine finds an outlet, whilst it refuses an entrance even to the tips of one's fingers. Thus that part is protected as it were by a cuirass against foreign mentules; only he to whom the law of Hymen alloted it has an easy access to it whenever he chooses."

DRAWER TYPES

This type is susceptible of a number of variations, its common feature being that all of them tend in fundamental design to a close-fitting pair of drawers. The irremovable tight cloth panties worn by the woman in Pierre Louys' story, already referred to, is of this category. There have also been fashioned various stout, sung trunks of heavy cloth or leather having sewn in them apertured metal plates to fit over and guard the pubic region, the whole held in place by a draw-string around the waist fastened with a padlock. The contrivance described by the

lawyer Freydier in his celebrated plea for the girdle-wearing Mdll. Lajon was apparently of this sort as it was described in Freydier's own words as being: "A kind of drawers, hemmed and worked like the meshes of a net with several brass wires woven into each other, forms a girdle which comes around and fastens in front with a padlock of which Sieur Berhle [the defendant] has the key. This contour, which forms the enclosure of the prison of which he is the gaoler, has several seams which are sealed with brands of red sealing wax, set from distance to distance. Sieur Berhle holds the seal with which he makes these brands, and, indeed, the engraving on it is most singular and inimitable. But there is nothitng surprising in this: a porter usually takes his precautions, and wishes to be sure of his gates and locks."

It is obvious that the girdles of this type did not offer the same degree of safety as did those of all-metal construction, as the sharp knife could have gained passage past them almost as readily as the key. However, the damage to the garment would have revealed the woman's dereliction and made her liable to punitive measures, so these devices at least served the function of a fairly dependable spy on the lady's virtue if not a trustworthy guard. Sieur Berhle apparently was fully cognizant of this contingency, realizing even the possibility that Mdlle Lajon might have carefully picked loose some of the stitching and then have sewn the girdle back in place after she had been "untrue," so he ingeniously took precaution against such a thing by impressing a seal over every seam and place where the garment might have been raveled so that the seal would be broken in the process and the tale would be out. The same idea is utilized today on bottles of liquor and gas meters to prevent tampering.

The lock by which the girdle is secured in place may either be built into and part of the structure of the girdle itself, as in the case of the anterior model in the Cluny museum mentioned above, or it may be one or more padlocks inserted through hasp-like devices where slots in the waist-band slip over eyes fastened to the end of the intercrural plate. Some of these padlocks were real gems of the locksmith's art, combining smallness with strength and security against tampering. Most of them were made to be opened with a key, but there were some of a cylindrical shape built up of a number of discs that could be rotated separately, the discs having various characters around their periphery so that when they were properly aligned the lock would open—an early type of combination lock.

The chastity belt is commonly thought of as having had its vogue and exhaustitng it during and shortly after the Renaissance. However, later years, and even quite recent times, are not without their examples of this contraption. According to some information obtained by Dingwall, some girls of New Zealand who were living near the Public Works Camps on the West Coast were outfitted with gadgets of this sort. It seems that a young man who was trying to "make" one of the girls got as far as getting her clothes off, but then found his way blocked by a metal plate she was wearing which was attached to a hip band and fitted sungly over her genitals. Also, around the middle of the last century Lieutenant Boudyck Bartiaanen reported finding some in use in Java and countries thereabouts.

Nor has our own country been free of this practice. Travelers have described devices put on Indian girls that have all the characteristics of a chastity girdle, and the early Pennsylvania Dutch had a drawer-like garment made of heavy leather straps studded with rivets and so fashioned that when placed about the hips the straps could all be gathered together in back where they were secured with a stout padlock. This was often termed an *een houder* or *eye holder* (vulva guard), or at times *Day Belt* as nervous mothers used to put them on their young daughters when they went on picnics or other trips with young men. According to some testimony, such a belt may still be now and again encountered in that locality.

According to the article on this subject in that most remarkable

of sex reference books, the "Bilder Lexikon," girdles of chastity were readily obtainable in France up to the time of the Franco-Prussian War (1870) and were rather openly advertised at prices ranging from about 120-180 francs. Indeed, here is the translation of a copy of such an advertisement that appeared around that period:

NO MORE RAPE

A Guardian of Woman's Fidelity

With armor-plate and simple lock .....120 francs
With armor-plate and lock de luxe ..... 18 francs
With armor-plate and silver lock, the entire belt of special workmanship ..... 320 francs

It will be sent on receipt of a money order payable to M. Cambon, notary and mayor of Cassagnes-Comtaux, through Rignac (Aveyron), the treasurer.

* * *

It appears that even in those days and in such products there was already a tendency to put out sucker-bait in the form of the "super de luxe" model that today is such a plague in merchandising. That 320 francs job must have been strictly for the carriage trade, and even the other grades were in the nature of a luxury. But the man who had to count his sous and still wished to keep a mechanical eye upon the wife's wifely virtue had no cause to give up hope entirely if he was at all handy with tools and had a little home workshop, for around 1885 there appeared to French eyes the following golden opportunity:

NO MORE RAPE!

The Edozone or Chastity Belt
Guardian of the Fidelity of Women
in Various Epochs and Countries.
How to Construct It Secretly and Easily.
Extracts from Numerous Letters and Articles.

* * *

The purpose of this little book, which has been published by permission of the *Congregation de l'Index,* is to satisfy whatever curiosity its title excites. In most cases a reading of it will prove amusing; in others, it will prove both useful and instructive.

All those who believe that, as Boileau says,

L'homme qui n'a que la passion pour guide
A besoin qu'on lui mette et le mors et la bride.
[The man who has only his passion for guide
Should by a bit and a bridle be tied.]

will find of inestimable value these instructions on how to provide a means of defense against rape, adultery, and fornication.

* * *

How those basement workshops must have hummed shortly after this appeared!

Lest there be some who think the idea of a chastity belt belongs to a bygone age, it may be of interest to point out that no longer ago than 1903 there was a patent issued in Germany for a chastity belt for use "against marital infidelity," and it was granted to, of all people, a woman, one Frau Emilie Schafer! However, there seems to have been nothing done about it, and the patent expired after six months.

But though Frau Schafer did not go into the business of manufacturing chastity girdles, they apparently have not been unobtainable in the 20th century. Caufeynon was investigating this subject in Paris in 1904 and instituted a number of inquiries as to the possible existence of any manufacturers of girdles of chastity at that time. He declares that he received a number of replies to indicate that there were, and he gives

three of them that he obtained from makers of surgical appliances, and in the shop of one of these he even saw a chastity belt of modern fabrication. These letters that Caufeynon received are quite curious for the cold, business-like air in which they deal with so extraordinary and unconventional a matter:

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter received this morning, I wish to state that I can make the sort of belt you ask for. As to dimensions: it is necessary to have the circumference of the pelvis, with the measurements taken a little higher in the rear so that it may pass slightly beneath the navel; also the circumference of the thighs.

The price of this appliance is 100 francs with a sterling silver bowl and fine trimmings. Delivery cannot be made before one week at least.

Hoping this will be agreeable to you . . .

B———

* * *

Dear Sir:

I have your honored letter of the 18th. I can fill your order for the object in which you are interested.

It is in silver, its interior gilded to prevent oxidation. The appliance can be used in any fashion you choose, both for anterior and posterior protection. But I must bring to your attention the fact that the latter carries its inconvenience: namely, that it is necessary to raise the appliance for the satisfaction of posterior needs. This is not the case with belts which guard the anterior only, their satisfaction being accomplished with the apparatus remaining in place. The belt is kept secure by means of a padlock. The prices:

For the anterior appliance ..... 300 francs
For the combination appliance ..... 500 francs

The necessary measurements are: the circumference of the body above the pubic—as indicated by the dotted line [in reference to a line drawing accompanying the letter]; the size of the pubis—as indicated by the arrow.

Hoping to be of service, etc.

A———

* * *

Dear Sir:

If you can come to my office between 2:30 and 5 for the appliance in question, I shall give you the desired information. I have already made several belts of this kind.

Yours, etc.,

L———

* * *

The readiness with which Caufeynon received these responses, their conciseness and preciseness, and their complete lack of surprise over the unusualness of such a request, give strong evidence that early 20th century France was by no means a stranger to the chastity girdle.

No practice has achieved any real importance unless it has run afoul of the law, and to this the employment of chastity belts is no exception. As might readily be imagined, the plaintiff in the litigation has generally been some woman who has been forced to wear one of these devices by a man—her husband or lover. The most renowned of such legal case occurred around 1750 in France and involved the complaint of one Mdlle. Lajon against her lover Sieur Berhle for his forcing her to wear one of these contrivances, to which reference has already been made, and the details of which are to be found in the rather lengthy plea of the girl's lawyer Freydier. There is record of a law suit resulting from the wearing of a chastity girdle as early as the

middle of the 17th century, but it is in the 19th century that there seems to have been the largest number of such actions. In addition to numerous minor affairs, there were several cases that achieved considerable notoriety and even reached the newspapers. One of these occurred in Spain in 1882 and concerned a jealous and suspicious married doctor who forced, not his wife, but his mistress to wear a chastity girdle while he was out of town on calls. Then in Paris, in 1892, the law had to act in the case of a jelly factory workman, Hufferte, who had seduced a girl from the same factory and then forced her to wear a girdle to insure against anyone else doing the same thing. And around the turn of the century the Roman courts had to act in the case of a sculptor who had compelled his wife to submit to a girdle of his own making.

Paris appears to have had most of such legal incidents, however, and they extended over into the 20th century. In 1910, a druggist of the Rue de Vaugirard, one Parat, was haled before the court for curelty to his wife—not only did he insist that she wear a chastity belt, but in addition he chained her to a bed-post! M. Parat was certainly leaving nothing to chance. And in 1932 there was the case of a worker in the French Mint in Paris, a Henri Littiere, who had happened to visit the Cluny Museum, had seen the chastity girdles on display there, liked the idea, had a surgical instrument house make one for him, and forced his wife to wear it. But stern justice was meted out to him by the French Court—he ended up with a prison sentence of one week!

Nor has our own fair land been a stranger to such lawsuits. For example, in 1931, the New York courts had to handle the case of Mrs. John Bartz, of Batavia, N. Y., who declared that for 20 years she had had to submit to the wearing of a steel re-enforced leather girdle. All of which strongly indicates that the chastity belt has as yet by no means become strictly a museum piece, though they form a focus of interest in many such institutions.

Extant examples of chastity girdles may be seen at a number of places. Besides those already mentioned in the Cluny Museum in Paris, there are some on exhibit at museums in other parts of France, as Sens, Montauban, Tours, Rennes, and Poitiers. In Germany there are, or at least were, some at the National Museum of Berlin, the National Museum of Munich, and at Wurzburg, at Nuremberg, and in the collection at the Erbach Castle in the Odenwald. In England specimens are to be found at the Farnham Museum of Blandford, Dorset, the museum at Birmingham, and in London at the Toussaud Museum. In Italy, there are some displayed at St. Mark's Palace in Venice, and in Spain at the Escorial of Madrid. In addition to these, there are not a few to be discovered in various private collections.

A question that arises naturally in connection with such a practice as the wearing of chastity belts is, just how common was it in its heydey? Another is, what class of people was most given to its employment? As to the first, we find answers tending toward both extremes. Some there are who forcefully assert that such girdles never were used to any important extent, saying even that the extant museum examples are forgeries or the product of some maniac's perverted imagination. Others would have us believe that few western European homes were without them from the 16th to the 18th centuries. Perhaps this first question can be partially answered by considering the second: what class of people utilized the girdles? It is quite obvious that the wealthy, privileged class formed the majority of the chastity girdle clientele, for these little gadgets were too expensive an investment for the average workingman, and in addition the toil-ridden life of the common people was not such as to afford much opportunity for the sort of amorous adventures, either real or suspected, that led to the imposing of these pubic prisons upon women. The common man was rarely away from home over-night, to say nothing of for long periods as were the wealthy and noble classes, nor were his sensibilities, which approximated those

of the beasts of the field, especially attuned to such ferocious regard for his sexual property rights as were those of the upper crust. The opinion of a renowned investigator of sex matters, Eduard Fuchs, may be taken as giving a fairly balanced view in this connection:

> "An historic examination of the chastity belt raises the question as to which classes employed it, and the extent of its use. The first question can be answered thus: it was the ruling and propertied classes—royalty and the merchant middle class. As to its frequency of employment, there is no doubt that the practice was quite widespread.
>
> "We know definitely from their costliness and artistry—numerous specimens are of gold and silver and many are beautifully engraved and encrusted—that only persons of high and wealthy station could afford them. Their extended use is demonstrated by not a few literary allusions. Further proof of their great popularity is to be found in various pictures still extant.
>
> "Most of these [pictures] come from Germany while literary references come from every country. There are allusions to chastity belts in *novella,* poems, proverbs, riddles, jokes, carnival plays as well as in chronicles and contemporary descriptions."

In addition to this, which Fuchs fails to mention, is the fact that there are various Renaissance technical scripts which contain details and directions for the construction of chastity girdles. All of which seems to indicate that chastity belts were by no means few and far between.

INFIBULATION

The word *infibulation,* like so much of the terminology dealing with things sexual, has come to denote a number of operations or practices of rather a different nature, having in common only the attempt forcibly to safeguard some person's chastity.

Etymologically, infibulation means broadly simply "fastening with a buckle or clasp," and carries no especial sexual connotations. More particularly, it has come to designate the "buckling or fastening up of the genital organs." But the fastening here worked upon the genitalia is quite different from that accomplished by the chastity girdle. There the genitals along with some portion of the genital region was locked up or imprisoned in an enclosing contrivance, whereas with infibulation the organ *itself* is in some manner so fastened up or blocked as to prohibit sexual intercourse, without there being any confining device about the adjoining portion of the body.

The word *fibula* indicates some sort of clasp or buckle, and it was through the putting of such a clasp upon the genitals that the term *infibulation* came about. Now, infibulation differs from chastity belts further in that it is applicable to both sexes. Indeed, it is the male organ that best lends itself to being fastened up with a clasp. But the term has been broadened to include not only such fastening operations practiced on either sex, but also had been extended to cover any method of genital securing, whether done with a clasp or buckle or by any other means, often even including surgical operations to this end. Such vagueness of terminology is admittedly bad, but it exists and is employed widely. It will therefore probably be more expeditious and much clearer to examine infibulation in each of its major aspects rather than as a confused whole.

FEMALE INFIBULATION

The infibulation of women consists, in a word, of in some manner fastening together the labia majora, or the large lips of the vulva,

or the labia minor, the small lips, so that it is impossible for the male organ to enter the vagina. That is the basic purpose of infibulation—how it has been accomplished in various ages and localities has been the result of the ingenuity and resources of the moment.

It appears that infibulation is a much more ancient practice than that of the wearing of chastity girdles. Herodotus, who wrote in the 5th century B.C., speaks of the Ethiopians as performing it rather freely on their wives, and compares it with similar Roman customs. Strabo and other olden writers give reports of the same nature, and Rhodius and Fabricius d'Aquapendente refer to the use of infibulation in antiquity as being customarily practiced upon females for the preservation of chastity.

The simplest method of infibulating a woman is by piercing both of the great lips of the vulva, passing a piece of wire through the holes, and fastening the ends of the wire together so as to form a sort of ring. If this was done in some suitable manner so as to cause the holes to heal on their inner surfaces and become permanent (as by running a sterile string through them and moving it frequently until healing had taken place), this ring might be removed and replaced from time to time, according to the needs of the husband or other male in charge, without especial pain or risk of infection. In all too many instances, however, the act was rather brutally carried out. The ends of this wire could be secured by twisting them together (for without suitable tools firmly twisted wire is quite difficult to undo), or in many cases they were soldered together. One cannot but wonder at the woman's reaction to the approach of heat sufficient for soldering to so sensitive a locality. The wire loop method served well for females who were intended to be put out of venereal circulation for a considerable period of time, but he who desired ready access to his wife upon occasion found it much more practical and convenient to make the labial holes a bit larger and to pass through them the locking bar of a specially contrived padlock with the locking bar shaped for the purpose. A simple turn of the key and the woman was available; a snap of the padlock and she was once more secure. Here were all the advantages of convenience of the later chastity belt, along with much less of a sanitary problem. There was, of course, as with the other the ever-present danger of love's laughing at locksmiths through the obtaining of a duplicate key—but then, what in life is 100 percent certain, and especially so in love-life?

Not infrequently the vulva has been secured simply by sewing its lips together. Sufficient stitches of strong thread are made through the fleshy parts of the labia majora to draw and hold them fairly closely together, thus preventing entrance of the membrum virile and permitting the exit of the urine and menses. Naturally, such stitching could readily be cut by an interloper, but this would constitute a most obvious evidence of what had transpired, and replacing the stitching after the event would be difficult to do so as exactly to duplicate the original and in most instances would be amply painful to outweigh the expected pleasure of illicit dalliance with a lover. Some cases of such labial tailoring have created sufficient stir to have reached the public press. One of the best-known of these took place in Leicester, England, around 1737 and may be found recorded in *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle* of that year. It seems that one George Baggerley of a sudden got overly concerned about the chastity of his good wife and in order to set his mind at rest he without any ado one day ups and sews up her point of vulnerability, without the slightest preparation or precaution to make the operation easier. In the words of the account, "the said George Baggerley a certain Needle and Thread into and through the Skin and Flesh of the Private Parts of the said Dorothy in divers Places, then and there wickedly, barbarously and inhumanly did force, and the Private Parts of her the said Dorothy Baggerley, with the Needle and Thread aforesaid, did then and there sew up." The wife did not especially care for this type of distrust in her fidelity and went complaining

to mother and the neighbors. They promtply released her from her painful predicament and had George haled before the court, where he was fined 20 shillings and sentenced to prison for two years. As he left the court all the women started beating and clawing him, not so much because of the ill treatment he had accorded Dorothy, but because of the affront his action offered women in general!

Labial sewing, however, is not confined to bygone years. As recently as 1917 the *Indian Medical Gazette* carried a report of a woman's vulva having been closed by stitching with silk ligatures.

A natural advantage of the chastity belt over infibulation is the fact that the avenue of unnatural pleasures may be barricaded as readily as that of the natural, and both at the same time by a single application. However, posterior infibulation has been by no means unknown, and a ring passed through perforations appropriately placed in the fleshy portion of the buttocks has served to forestall the usual resource of the ambitious peddler who has been refused entrance at the front door. Indeed, Celsus tells us that among the Romans it was often *only* the pathway of the backward Cupid that carried the sentinel ring, but, then, everyone knows what fundament-alists the Romans were in love. On the whole, however, posterior infibulation was much less practiced than the anterior.

Infibulation has had, and still to some extent has, a good deal of employment in Oriental countries, especially in India and Persia, and in Africa. Some form of closure with a metal ring is usually resorted to, and though sewing of the vulva is quite often performed it is generally done in such a manner that it approached the method of infibulation more properly known as *suturing,* which we shall discuss a bit later.

As has been pointed out, infibulation by sewing has occurred in fairly recent times, and the same is true of the more orthodox infibulation by a ring or a padlock. In the *American Medico-Surgical Bulletin* of New York, issue of December 15, 1894. Collier reports a case of a patient of his who gave evidences of infibulation. She was of German origin, about 28 years of age, had been married for some years, was the mother of several children, and was about five weeks pregnant at the time she consulted Collier because of some uterine disorder. Examination disclosed two holes in her vulva labia, and persistent inquiry about them at last brought forth the reluctant admission that they were for a padlock. Shortly after she had been sent to this country to meet her husband-to-be (who had left Germany some time before), he had perforated her labia minora and, after she had recovered from the several weeks of illness this had caused her, he had placed a padlock through the holes and for some years after he had habitually locked her up after each intercourse.

F. S. Krauss, the outstanding authority on sex practices in the Balkans, asserts that to this day infibulation is one of the various measures practiced in those countries to safeguard wifely virtue. Other methods that he mentions include the plugging of the vagina in different manners, and the injection into it of certain corrosive materials that cause severe inflammations that last for weeks and are so painful to the least contact as to preclude all thought of sexual activity.

Nor have the animals been passed by. In the "Exercitiones de generatione animalium" of the famous Dr. Wm. Harvey, published in 1651, there is mention made of a mare who had her genitalia infibulated, and it is added that this did not prevent a successful pregnancy. This is decidedly reminiscent of a device recently advertised in dog fanciers' periodicals, called "Doggy Britches," which is simply a snug-fitting pair of little panties intended to be fastened about the haunches of bitches in heat so as to prevent untoward encounters with roving predatory males. So it may be seen that even animals are not free from the burden of externally imposed chastity.

MALE INFIBULATION

The safeguarding of chastity is commonly considered as being directed at female chastity. Not only are most of the devices for accomplishing this (as the chastity belt and suturing) adapted exclusively to the female anatomy, but also in general the dominant male would not submit to such inhibitory measures. With infibulation, however, we have a method of virtue vigilance which not only is even more readily applicable to the male than to the female, but also appears to have had its origination largely for use on that sex.

The term *fibula,* as has been said, means "buckle" or "clasp," and in antiquity it was applied to fastenings for other purposes besides the securing of chastity, such as holding garments together, keeping the edges of wounds closed, and for similar general "holding together" purposes. Its employment in enforcing male continence seems to have evolved subsequently to these others, and its application to the female somewhat later still.

Undoubtedly, the most famous description of the male-restraining fibula is that of old Holyday in the notes to his translation of the Sixth Satire of Juvenal, given in reference to the expression to "unbutton a comedian:"

> "The fibula does not strictly signifie a button, but also a buckle or clasp, or such like stay. In this place, the poet expresses by it the instrument of servilitie applied to those that were employed to sing upon the stage; the Praetor who set forth playes for the delight of the people, buying youths for that purpose, and that they might not, by lust, spoil their voice, their overseers closed their shame with a case of metal having a sharp spike of the same metal passing by the side of it, and sometimes used one of another form; or by a nearer crueltie, they thrust a brazen or silver wire through that part which the Jews did lose in circumcision.
>
> ". . . But whatsoever the fashion or invention was, the trust was but fond that was committed to them, seeing that the art of lust and gold could make them as vain as the Italian engines of jealousy in this day."

Holyday reproduces illustrations of two types of fibula, which he got from Pignerius. Excellent reproductions of these may also be found in John Davenport's "Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs."

The male fibula, then, in few words was some sort of sharp-pointed buckle(clasp, or "brooch," intended to be thrust through and across the end of the male prepuce after it had been drawn past the tip of the glans penis. The fastening was loose enough to permit urination, but naturally such a gadget dangling at the end of the mentula would quite effectively prevent—through bulkiness, pain, and constrictive inhibition of erection—its employment for any form of sexual indulgence.

Such restraint on male sexual activity was desired by the ancients for several reasons, the chief of which were: to prevent singers from losing their voice, the idea in those times being that carnal intercourse was deleterious to the quality of the voice (in which we have something of a parallel later in the practice of the Roman Catholic Church in castrating boys so as to preserve their soprano voices for choirs of the large cathedrals) ; to prevent gladiators and other athletes appearing in the public games and spectacles for exhausting their physical vigor in venereal jousting; to keep boys from masturbating; and for enhancing

the sexual vigor, attractiveness, and consequently the value, of certain males.

Freeborn, adult Romans, naturally, rarely submitted to this operation. It was practiced only upon those males who were under the control of others, as young men under the domination of their parents and slaves under that of their masters. As practically all singers, dancers, actors, gladiators, and the like were slaves, they were in consequence subject to infibulation if the master deemed it advisable. Not a few of the more personable and robust of the slaves in any of these classes, or even of the mere servant class, were infibulated primarily for business reasons. Since the opinion was that a man who was kept from all carnal intercourse must of necessity store up a tremendous amount of sexual vigor, a notion which was freely shared by the Roman ladies, masters would parade their more likely slaves in public places with their fibulae, or some indication of it, in evidence. The more amorously avid of the ladies (and according to all reports a large portion of the Roman women *were* quite avid) would eagerly bid for the privilege of enjoying these slaves unclasped, and the master obtained a nice revenue simply by unpinning and pining up his men. Juvenal makes reference to this practice, and Martial sends many pointed barbs at certain women, or their meek husbands, on whom he has the goods for such activity.

It has sometimes been said that the fibula was worn to conceal the organ of generation through modesty, but such a statement arises through a misunderstanding of terms. It is obvious that a relatively small ring or clasp through the prepuce could do little to conceal the male member; indeed, it would serve rather to attract attention in that direction. There has been a long-standing confusion between the *theca* (at times also called *aluta* and the *fibula*. The theca was simply some sort of rather loose sheath, usually woolen, that was worn over and enclosed the entire male organ, and had no fastenings that could not be removed at will by the wearer. Such a device could well conceal the organ. It was as a rule worn only by those encumbered with a fibula and served to hide this clasp from view or to help support its weight, or both. As a matter of fact, the wearing of a theca soon came to be taken as open evidence of the presence of a fibula beneath, and men who for any reason wished to be thought of as having a fibula had simply to slip on a theca to accomplish their purpose. Martial refers to such a person in his amusing epigram (vii, 82) to the unfortunate Menophil who, wishing to conceal the fact of his Jewish extraction, wore a theca as if he were infibulated, but had the ill luck in the public gymnasium grounds to have the theca slip off and reveal to everyone that he was not infibulated but circumcised.

Infibulation was also long known in the East, but for somewhat different reasons. According to Sir Richard Burton, many Easterners perforate the prepuce and skin of the penis and place in the holes various objects, not with an eye to preventing coitus but rather, to enlarge the size of the organ and increase the woman's pleasure. Also, Mohammedan saints, fakirs, and holy men have themselves infibulated for religious reasons, as an evidence of their perpetual devotion to chastity. As these are meant primarily for show, they are often quite large and their habitual semi-nude condition insures free display of them. As an added evidence of faith, some of these martyrs of the mentula have their fibula supplied with a lock and key of which they deposit with the magistrate of their town or village. Just who guarantees the absence of a duplicate key has never been made plain. Nevertheless, the exhibitionistic continence of these holy men is greatly venerated, and devout Mohammedan women have not infrequently been seen to kneel down and humbly kiss the preputial ring. Faith is indeed a marvelous thing.

Though fibulation flourished under the ancient Romans, there is no reason to believe that it originated with them. In fact, it is often asserted to be as old as circumcision, which practice is of immemorial

antiquity and goes back far beyond the earliest scraps of recorded history. The old scholar Meinsius declares that infibulation may be traced back to the time of the siege of Troy (12th century B.C.) for he points out that according to the "Odyssey" (bk. viii, line 477) when Agamemnon departed for the Trojan War and left his wife Clytemnestra in the care of the singer Demodocus, it appears that he took the precaution of seeing that the latter had been infibulated.

The prevalency of the practice is attested to by the number of references to it to be found in ancient writers. In this connection mention has already been made of Juvenal and Martial, the latter being particularly rich in slighting innuendo on the matter. Pliny speaks of it, especially as a preventive of masturbation, and Celsus gives a detailed description of the operation, Strabo and Hieronymus Mercurialis both make mention of it, and somewhat later Schurig treats of the subject in relation to both sexes in some detail. It was even regarded as a dire possibility in the love life of the ancient pagan gods, for in Epigram LXXVIII of the "Priapeia" we find that lusty god Priapus earnestly pleading *Neve imponite fibulam Priapo* (I pray you hang no buckle on Priapus' yard), which expression passed into proverb in olden times. More concrete evidence is to be found in several extant ancient statuettes of men, in especial one of a musician and another of a Negro, bearing a fibula on the penis.

As for the method of performing infibulation, one of the most explicit and earliest accounts comes to us from around the 1st century B.C. and is to be found in the "De Medicina" (vii, 25, sect. 3) of Celsus, a famed physician of the time of the first Roman Caesars. Celsus directs that first of all the prepuce be drawn forward and marks made on each side of it in such a manner that, when the prepuce is released, the marks do not return past the end of the glans. This is to be tested and tried, he says, until marks are had that will be free of the glans, and these will then be the places for the location of the fibula. After the marking is ascertained to be correct, holes are to be pierced through the prepuce with a needle and thread, and the two loose ends of the thread are to be tied together and the thread is to be run back and forth through the holes daily until they are healed, thus leaving two little openings on either side of the prepuce which will not close. When this has taken place, the thread is to be removed and the fibula, which Celsus insists should be light in weight, may be inserted through the little orifices.

We have another set of directions from a somewhat later period (aroud 350 A.D.) in the works of Oribasius the Divine, who was chief physician to the Emperor Julian. His method does not differ essentially from that of Celsus, from whom he most likely adapted it, but he recommends that a palm fiber instead of a thread be passed through the preputial holes after piercing, and that after this has been passed back and forth for several days it be replaced by a small tin device to enlarge the openings and promote healing. A number of later writers on surgery did not find it out of place to consider the technique of infibulation, including the celebrated Fallopio, but this latter adds the comment that he thought that infibulation for restraining lust was scarcely necessary in his day as the prevalency of the dread Morbus Gallicus (syphilis) offered quite as effective an inhibitory influence.

The construction of the fibula was susceptible of some variation, within limits. Naturally, it could not well have been of too heavy or bulky design, for obvious reasons—Celsus makes an especial point of prescribing lightness of weight. A simple and inexpensive sort was a ring made of a piece of wire passed through the prepuce and having its ends fastened together, by twisting or soldering, so that it could not readily have been broken without some telltale indication. A common fashioning of the more elaborate sorts was something after the nature of our modern safety pin—a semi-circular piece of metal closed across its diameter by a straight, pointed bar hinged at one end and contrived to fit

into a retaining holder at the other. Holyday's illustrations, mentioned previously, show one of this type. They als odepict another whose mode of application is not entirely clear—as nearly as can be made out, it appears to be some sort of roughly conical metallic device fashioned to have its hollow interior slip over the male member, having holes at the tip for the exit of the urine, and having some sort of sharp hinged, slender spike-like arrangement around its central portion apparently intended to slip through the prepuce and hold the whole in place. This is based entirely upon an interpretation of Holyday's plate, there apparently being no ancient textual description of the *modus operandi* of such a contrivance available. The material of the fibulae would of course be preferably of some corrosion-resistant metal, gold, silver, and bronze seeming to have been most frequently employed. Their craftsmanship was often quite plain, on the strictly utilitarian models, but in some instances they were very intricately and elaborately embellished and ornamented, possibly when they were intended for some favorite slave of a wealthy Roman matron who could not bear that her darling have anything but the best. As for the manner of securing fibulae in place so that they could not be removed by the wearer or anyone but the master, this remains something of a mystery. The twisted or soldered wire rings could, of course, be removed, but some evidence of the fact would almost surely remain as their replacement could hardly have duplicated exactly the original installation. It is the safety-pin models that offer the puzzle. While locks of a sort for doors were known to the ancient Egyptian of the time of Nineveh and to the Roman of classical times, these were quite crude and cumbersome affairs, and locksmithing did not achieve the degree of perfection to permit it to turn out a lock tiny enough to be adapted to the fibula until well into medieval times, or later. The only readily apparent solution to this is that after the ancient fibulae were clasped in place a distinctive seal of some sort was placed over the keeper holding the free end of the preputial bar in such a manner that the fibula could not be opened without breaking the seal. This, however, is only conjecture.

Male infibulation, like that of the female, is not unknown in modern times, both in being advocated and in being practiced. From antiquity through the Middle Ages certain medical men advanced infibulation as a good means of subduing lust, increasing sexual vigor, and the like. In more recent times it has been promulgated mainly as a device for restraining masturbation. One of the first of the modern writers in this category was S. G. Vogel, who in 1786 recommended it enthusitcally over all other methods of checking masturbation, pointing out that it is quickly and easily done and gives by far the best guarantee of success, and asserting that it can be done without effecting any injury, a viewpoint which modern medicine does not share. In 1789, J. C. Jaeger advanced essentially the same idea. That this is no mere theory is borne out by reported cures through this method, as that of J. C. Campe, who in 1849 published the case of a young man patient of his who was given to masturbation and who wore a fibulatory ring for 15 years. In the latter part of the 19th century infibulation was practiced a number of times to combat masturbation in feeble-minded men. Other anti-masturbation devices that enjoyed considerable popularity during this period were a great variety of sheaths, cases, boxes, cages, and similar things fashioned so as to enclose the male genitalia and supplied with such straps and clasps as to enable them to be locked in place.

An amusing application of infibulation was advocated in 1827 by Karl August Weinhold. Here it was to be practiced, not in the interest of chastity, but as a contraceptive measure to counteract the growing overpopulation of Central Europe and the resultant poverty and misery of the people in general. He proposed that infibulation be applied wholesale to a large portion of the male population, choosing for it the feebleminded, criminal, and other elements deemed not fit to propagate the race.

In 1903, Caufeynon reported a case of fibulation for insuring fidelity. A Dr. Petroz was visited by a Frenchman of about 50 complaining of penile disorders, including preputial ulcers. Examination revealed that some holes had been pierced through the foreskin, apparently by a sharp, slender instrument. Persistent questioning revealed that while in Portugal some years before he had taken a beautiful woman of that country for his mistress, and so great was her attraction that he had remained there for quite a while. It gradually dawned upon him that she was of an exceedingly jealous temperament, a fact that was rather forcibly brought home to him one morning when he was awakened by a sharp pain in his penis and discovered, upon scrutiny, that he had been infibulated while he had slept by a small golden clasp the pin of which had been thrust through his prepuce and was secured in the clasp by means of a spring and small lock, the key of which his mistress retained. Her pleas coupled with his doting affection for her persuaded him to allow it to remain in place, and the woman could unlock and remove it to suit her pleasure. But still she was not satisfied, and one morning the Frenchman awoke to find his organ skewered with a second fibula. This, too, he was led to endure, and he continued to wear the fibulae for several years, "for her sake," until their reiterated removal and replacement at last brought on the affections that sent him to the doctor.

Much more significant than the Frenchman's willingness to wear these fibulae or the woman's desire to have him do so, is the fact that in such recent times it was possible for the woman to go out and obtain, apparently without too much difficulty, a device that is commonly considered to have been buried with the dead past, making it fairly obvious that infibulation, no more than the wearing of chastity belts, is by any means a closed issue.

SUTURING

It has been pointed out that the term *infibulation* has been given quite broad application, including all sorts of genital closures, both male and female, effected with any sort of ring, clasp, lock, or even by sewing with thread. To the simple, temporary closing by stitching the term may be in a sense justifiably applied, but when it is a question of utilizing stitching to work a surgical closure, the designation *suturing* is much more appropriate and correct.

Suturing, in a word, may be considered as "surgical infibulation," the closing tie in this case being not a ring or clasp, but a juncture of flesh. This method of safeguarding chastity has not had such a wide distribution as the others we have discussed and has had its greatest practice among the more primitive and less civilized peoples, as in particular those of Northeastern and Central Africa.

Suturing is performed only upon women. It differs from the simple sewing together of the lips of the vulva, which we considered under female infibulation, in that here the conjoining edges of the labia are so cut away or abraded as to present to each other raw surfaces which are held together by means of sutures, or compressed together by some other method, until they heal together as one.

Professor Seligman has given an account of this procedure among a Sudan Arab tribe. He says that the operation is commonly performed upon girls between the ages of three and six. The girl is placed upon her back, her legs with knees bent drawn well up over her abdomen, and the thighs spread apart as far as possible. The "surgeon," usually an old woman, begins by pulling out the clitoris as far as it will come and cutting it off as near the skin as can be managed. After this she cuts away most of the external parts of the vulva, leaving but a small area

untouched above the perineum. The wound is then smeared over with flour to inhibit bleeding, and the legs are bound closely together. At times a small plug is placed in the wound to keep an opening at the urethra for the urine. The legs are kept bound for from two to three weeks, after which healing has taken place and practically all external evidence of the vulva has been obliterated. Obviously, sexual intercourse under such conditions is utterly impossible. Of course, in later years when the girl is about to be married she must be "defibulated."

Suturing is still practiced in some parts of Egypt and among certain Negro tribes. Vivant Denon tells us that when the Arabs around Syena fled before the approach of the French army, there were found in the abandoned villages numerous young girls with their vulvas sewed up. According to the information of more recent travelers, this operation is usually performed upon girls at the age of about eight or nine. They also testify that it is not at all uncommon for it to be done to married women. They say that when a Nubian goes on a long trip or any expedition that will keep him from home for some time, he resorts to this operation as insurance against his wife's seeking such solace as she may for the absence of her bed-fellow—he simply calls in one of the elderly women who are expert at this procedure to perform the operation before he leaves, and has her in again for the opposite or opening operation when he returns. Such reputable authorities as Lindschotten, Werne, Hartmann, Lanzi, Brehm, and many others who are intimate with the customs and practices of Africa, all declare that it is not at all unusual for the women there to have their genitals sewed up and cut open a number of times in the course of their lives. They also pretty generally agree that this suturing is none too absolute a safeguard of wifely chastity during a husband's prolonged absence for, they say, many of the women do not hesitate to get themselves ripped open again in order to entertain a lover as soon as the husband is well on his way, and then simply have themselves sewed up again as soon as they hear from some passing caravan that he is on his way back home. Most white people would shudder in incomprehension at the thought of undergoing such torture simply to indulge in a little extra-marital hanky-panky in the bushes, but they would fail to realize that Africans are by training and environment much less given to according it serious significance. Drs. Ploss and Bartels, two eminent authorities on the subject, assert that throughout Africa the practice of suturing is as widespread as that of female circumcision, and in many localities this latter operation is considered sufficiently important that its absence in a girl is held to be ample grounds for her repudiation by her husband.

In closing, it may not be amiss to investigate what that most erudite and assiduous delver into the oddities and curiosities of sex lore, Dr. Jacobus X. . . ., author of the justly famed "Untrodden Fields of Anthropology," has to say upon the subject of suturing. He tells us that the operation consists mainly in the sewing up of the lips of the vulva, or in removing them by cutting, and causing the raw surface to heal together and adhere, leaving only a small orifice. He declares that it is common among the Gallas, Somalis, and Bedschas, tribes above the Nile cataracts, and that from there it extends through the peoples of Harrar to Massowa on the Red Sea. The custom, he says, appears to be of extreme antiquity, being mentioned by the famous ancient Arabian doctor Rhazes in his medical work of 10 volumes which he dedicated to King Al Mansur.

He agrees with the other authorities in seeing as the prime purpose of this operation the insuring of a maiden's chastity until her marriage, at which time she must submit to a counter-operation. He, too, has found that often when a husband is about to depart upon a long journey he will first force his wife to undergo a new suturing so that "no one shall trespass upon his premises during his absence." He points out an additional employment by mentioning that slave-dealers often utilized this means to protect the value of their merchandise.

So far as the Mohammedans are concerned, we learn from Brehm that while their law requires circumcision only, the people of the Sudan are rarely satisfied with this, but that "also, the lesser lips or nymphae being cut away, the greater lips, right from the *mons Veneris* to the vagina, unite in process of healing, so that only a narrow pipe is left open for the discharge of the urine."

Cailliaud, in his "Travels on the White Nile to Meroe and Senaar," also gives us a description of this extreme and cruel method of enforcing chastity, which I translate from the original French:

> "After having cut away these two membranes, the folds of the two are brought toward each other and the patient is kept in a state of almost complete immobility until they are united together by agglutination. By means of a slender cannula it is arranged to leave a small opening, scarcely sufficient for the natural discharges. Some time before marriage it is necessary to destroy by incision this adherence which is contrary to nature."

Dr. Jacobus X. . . . gives us an additional bit of interesting and curious information. When the girl's marriage has been decided upon, he explains, the future husband sends the girl's parents a wooden model of his penis, and the dimensions of this are used as a guide in incising a suitable opening into the closed vulva. This pre-nuptial "opening for business," he says, usually takes place not less than 20 days before the marriage so that there is time for complete healing to occur. Later on, when the wife is about ready to give birth to a child, the vulvar opening has to be further enlarged, but after the confinement has been completed it is frequently sewn up again so as to leave only its previous copulatory aperture.

SUMMARY

These, then, are the common methods of safeguarding chastity that are "reversible"—that is, that do not permanently physically disqualify the person upon whom they are practiced from any possible sexual activity, that may be put "on or off" more or less at will, at least at the will of someone. Other more drastic, permanent means of insuring chastity exist—from certain types of castration to the complete amputation of the membrum virile (as fearfully resorted to by the so holy Origen who did not trust the outcome of pitting his strength of will against the pricks of the flesh) with men, or the slitting, tearing, or complete extirpation of the vagina with women—but we are not concerned with them in this study.

A most obvious revelation of an examination of the safeguards of chastity is the innate barbarity and arrogance of man. The curtailing of such a basic human need as sexual expression by devices affording such physical torment, and usually upon a person who should have considerable claim upon one's affection and tenderness, denotes an unrestrained cruelty of nature not to be surpassed by the most primitive savage; where as the assumpton of the right and privilege to enforce such restraint upon the natural freedoms of another bespeaks a vain arrogance not to be exceeded by the most pompous of dictators.

But a more subtle and damning revelation is to be found in the insight these devices give us into our conception of virtue and chastity. With our warped and bigoted viewpoint we naively see these qualities as residing entirely in the genitals (or genital substitutes, as the anus) and that by locking up the abode of virtue we protect and preserve it. It would be as childish to regard the mouth as the seat of hunger simply because it is there we put food to satisfy it. The truth is that we are so hopelessly material in our outlook that we simply cannot envision anything that has no tangible aspects that we can confine

in a strongbox like our money or fence in like our property. If chastity depends solely upon a physical contact, a criminally raped woman would be as immoral as a low whore.

Chastity is an aspect, and only a small one, of morality, and morality is a spiritual or ethical attitude toward the world and one's fellows. Our own morality is the concern of each of us, and not that of another. When we condemn another's act as immoral, what we really mean is that we should be immoral if we ourselves committed that act. We see the Mohammedan women lift her dress and expose her genitals in order to cover her face before a stranger and we loftily declare her action to be immoral or immodest, though to that woman failure to cover her face would be immodesty indeed. That moral standards vary with time, place, and race soon become apparent to anyone who travels or studies at all, and to set up our own as the one supreme moral code is not only the height of arrogance but the depth of ignorance as well. The only true morality consists in the degree of success each of us has in remaining faithful to his individual code of ethics, particularly at those times when it might be expedient or profitable to depart from it, and certainly not in how well we manage to make our neighbors abide by it.

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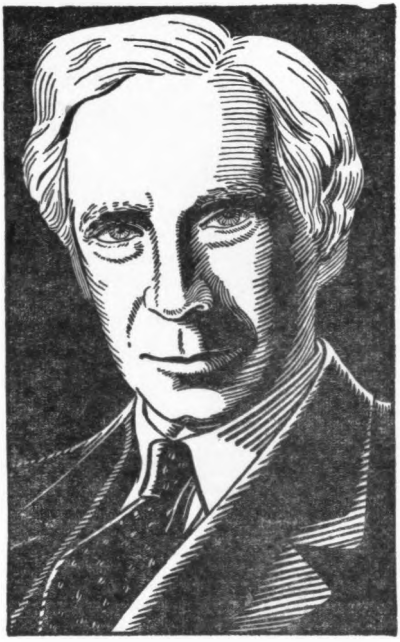

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Dr. Cauldwell's father — deceased since 1917 — was Gilbert Cauldwell, M. D., surgeon and anatomist. D. O. Cauldwell was schooled at Cleveland—at Purdue—and entered medical studies at the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery. Later this school, together with Bennett Medical College, was merged with Loyola U. (Chicago), where the ecclesiastical authorities in control failed to appreciate the advanced students of the merger, most of whom drifted away. A Freethinker, Cauldwell was forever in bad odor with the pious professors. He then took his transcript and was welcomed at the Universidad Nacional de Mexico, having fortunately, in earlier days, gained a command of Spanish. There he studied, practiced and took his degrees in medicine and science.

After several years of private (general) practice, Dr. Cauldwell became an Associate Medical Officer of the War Department and served also as an army contract surgeon. Later he served in war industries, as follows: Surgeon, Norfolk Dam Project; Ellis and Mountain Home, Arkansas; Medical Director, Seneca (Ill.) Shipyard. Then he returned to the War Department as neuro-psychiatrist, Induction Service. Then he became medical examiner at Ingalls, Pascagoula, Shipyard.

Dr. Cauldwell gave up his practice in 1945 to devote himself to writing, which he tackled with the utmost earnestness. From eight to 14 hours daily are devoted to reading, writing and research. Two or three hours each day are given to outdoor activity around his "Farm-Haven," in Alabama

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